

CHAPTER 5

WATER QUALITY PARTNERSHIPS IN THE SOUTH FORK FORKED DEER RIVER WATERSHED

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5.1 Background. The Watershed Approach relies on participation at the federal, state, local and nongovernmental levels to be successful. Two types of partnerships are critical to ensure success:

- Partnerships between agencies
- Partnerships between agencies and landowners

This chapter describes both types of partnerships in the South Fork Forked Deer River Watershed. The information presented is provided by the agencies and organizations described.

5.2 Federal Partnerships.

5.2.A. Natural Resources Conservation Service. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, provides technical assistance, information, and advice to citizens in their efforts to conserve soil, water, plant, animal, and air resources on private lands.

Performance & Results Measurement System (PRMS) is a Web-based database application providing USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, conservation partners, and the public fast and easy access to accomplishments and progress toward strategies and performance. The PRMS may be viewed at <http://sugarberry.itc.nrcs.usda.gov/netdynamics/deeds/index.html>. From the PRMS Products Menu, select "Products," then select "Conservation Treatments." Select the desired program and parameters and choose "Generate Report."

The data can be used to determine broad distribution trends in service provided to customers by NRCS conservation partnerships. These data do not show sufficient detail to enable evaluation of site-specific conditions (e.g., privately-owned farms and ranches) and are intended to reflect general trends.

CONSERVATION PRACTICE	ACRES
Conservation Buffer	59
Erosion Control	7,910
Irrigation Management	0
Nutrient Management Applied	3,564
Pest Management	2,558
Prescribed Grazing	453
Salinity and Alkalinity Control	0
Tree and Shrub Practices	520
Tillage and Residue Management	5,823
Wildlife Habitat Management	1,203
Wetlands Created, Restored, and Enhanced	0
Total	22,089

Table 5-1. Landowner Conservation Practices in Partnership with NRCS in South Fork Forked Deer River Watershed. Data are from PRMS for October 1, 1999 through September 30, 2000 reporting period. More information is provided in SFFD-Appendix V.

5.3 State Partnerships.

5.3.A. TDEC Division of Water Supply. Congress, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the states are increasing their emphasis on the prevention of pollution, particularly in the protection of the raw water sources for public water systems. The initial step toward prevention of contamination of public water supplies came with the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments of 1986. At that time, each state was required to develop a wellhead protection program to protect the water source of public water systems relying on groundwater (wells or springs). The new Source Water Assessment provisions of the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act of 1996 Amendments expanded the scope of protection beyond groundwater systems to include protection of the waters supplying surface water systems.

More information may be found at: www.state.tn.us/environment/dws .

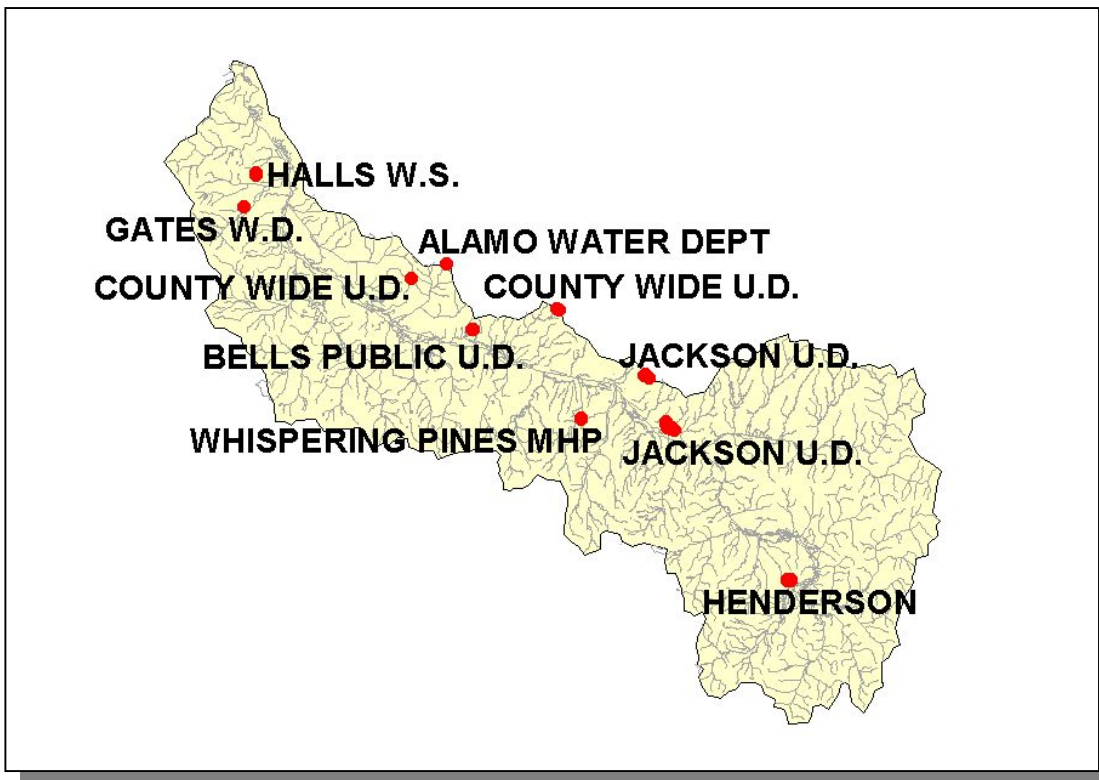


Figure 5-1. Location of Communities Using Groundwater for Water Supply in South Fork Forked Deer River Watershed.

A “wellhead” is the source area for the water, which is withdrawn through a well or spring, similar to the concept of the head of a river. To protect the water supply, it is important to know from where the water flowing to that well or spring is coming. Source water/wellhead protection areas for public water systems using groundwater are generally based on hydrologic considerations and/or modeling. Source water protection areas for public water systems using surface water are based on the portion of the watershed area upstream of the water intake.

There are three basic steps involved in a wellhead protection program: 1) defining the wellhead protection area, 2) inventorying the potential contaminant sources within that area, and 3) developing a wellhead protection plan. The official designation of wellhead protection areas provides valuable input and emphasis to government agencies in the siting of facilities and the prioritization and cleanup of contaminated sites.

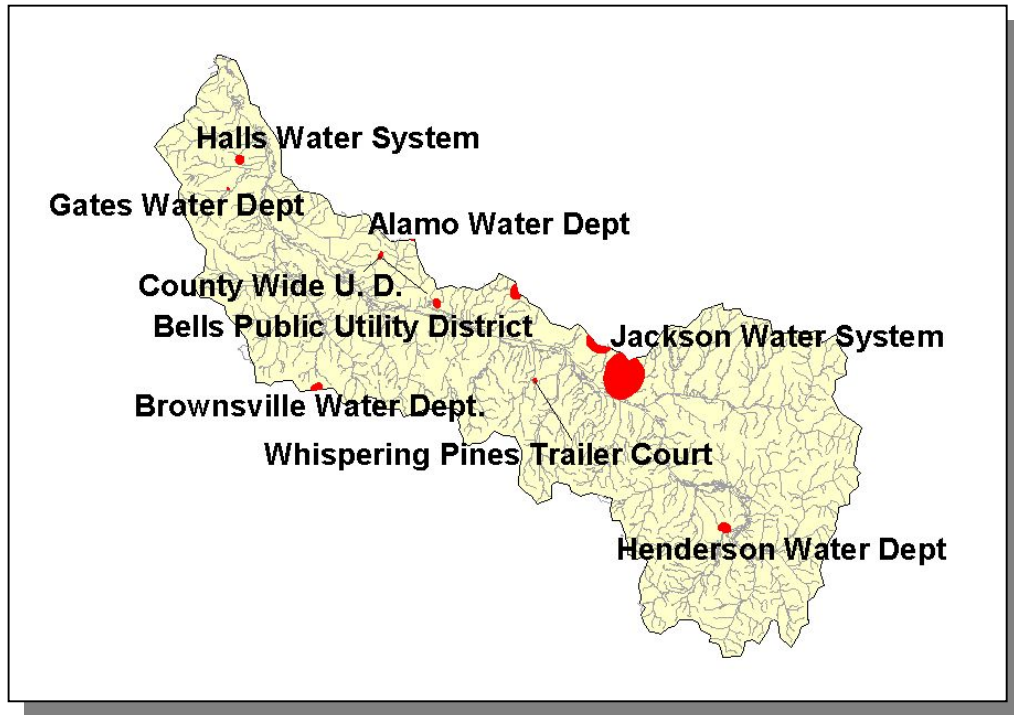


Figure 5-2. Location of Communities in the Wellhead Protection Program in South Fork Forked Deer River Watershed.

5.3.B. State Revolving Fund. TDEC administers the state's Clean Water State Revolving Fund Program. Amendment of the Federal Clean Water Act in 1987 created the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (SRF) Program to provide low-interest loans to cities, counties, and utility districts for the planning, design, and construction of wastewater facilities. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency awards annual capitalization grants to fund the program and the State of Tennessee provides a twenty-percent funding match. TDEC has awarded loans totaling approximately \$500 million since the creation of the SRF Program. SRF loan repayments are returned to the program and used to fund future SRF loans.

SRF loans are available for planning, design, and construction of wastewater facilities, or any combination thereof. Eligible projects include new construction or upgrading/expansion of existing facilities, including wastewater treatment plants, pump stations, force mains, collector sewers, interceptors, elimination of combined sewer overflows, and nonpoint source pollution remedies.

SRF loan applicants must pledge security for loan repayment, agree to adjust user rates as needed to cover debt service and fund depreciation, and maintain financial records that follow governmental accounting standards. SRF loan interest rates range from zero percent to market rate, depending on the community's per-capita income, taxable sales, and taxable property values. Most SRF loan recipients qualify for interest rates between 2 and 4 percent. Interest rates are fixed for the life of the term of the loan. The maximum loan term is 20 years or the design life of the proposed wastewater facility, whichever is shorter.

TDEC maintains a Priority Ranking System and Priority List for funding the planning, design, and construction of wastewater facilities. The Priority Ranking List forms the basis for funding eligibility determinations and allocation of Clean Water SRF loans. Each project's priority rank is generated from specific priority ranking criteria and the proposed project is then placed on the Project Priority List. Only projects identified on the Project Priority List may be eligible for SRF loans. The process of being placed on the Project Priority List must be initiated by a written request from the potential SRF loan recipient or their engineering consultant. SRF loans are awarded to the highest priority projects that have met SRF technical, financial, and administrative requirements and are ready to proceed.

Since SRF loans include federal funds, each project requires development of a Facilities Plan, an environmental review, opportunities for minority and women business participation, a State-approved sewer use ordinance and Plan of Operation, and interim construction inspections.

For further information about Tennessee's Clean Water SRF Loan Program, call (615) 532-0445 or visit their Web site at <http://www.tdec.net/srf>.



Figure 5-3. Location of Communities Receiving SRF Loans or Grants in the South Fork Forked Deer River Watershed. More information is provided in SFFD-Appendix V.

5.3.C. Tennessee Department of Agriculture. The Tennessee Department of Agriculture's Water Resources Section consists of the federal Section 319 Nonpoint Source Program and the Agricultural Resources Conservation Fund Program. Both of these are grant programs which award funds to various agencies, non-profit organizations, and universities that undertake projects to improve the quality of Tennessee's waters and/or educate citizens about the many problems and solutions to water pollution. Both programs fund projects associated with what is commonly known as "nonpoint source pollution."

The Tennessee Department of Agriculture's Nonpoint Source Program (TDA-NPS) has the responsibility for management of the federal Nonpoint Source Program, funded by the US Environmental Protection Agency through the authority of Section 319 of the Clean Water Act. This program was created in 1987 as part of the reauthorization of the Clean Water Act, and it established funding for states, territories and Indian tribes to address NPS pollution. Nonpoint source funding is used for installing Best Management Practices (BMPs) to stop known sources of NPS pollution, training, education, demonstrations and water quality monitoring. The TDA-NPS Program is a non-regulatory program, promoting voluntary, incentive-based solutions to NPS problems. The TDA-NPS Program basically funds three types of programs:

- **BMP Implementation Projects.** These projects aid in the improvement of an impaired waterbody, or prevent a non-impaired water from becoming listed on the 303(d) List.
- **Monitoring Projects.** Up to 20% of the available grant funds are used to assist the water quality monitoring efforts in Tennessee streams, both in the state's 5-year watershed monitoring program, and also in performing before-and-after BMP installation, so that water quality improvements can be verified.
- **Educational Projects.** The intent of educational projects funded through TDA-NPS is to raise the awareness of landowners and other citizens about practical actions that can be taken to eliminate nonpoint sources of pollution to the waters of Tennessee.

The Tennessee Department of Agriculture Agricultural Resources Conservation Fund Program (TDA-ARCF) provides cost-share assistance to landowners across Tennessee to install BMPs that eliminate agricultural nonpoint source pollution. This assistance is provided through Soil Conservation Districts, Resource Conservation and Development Districts, Watershed Districts, universities, and other groups. Additionally, a portion of the TDA-ARCF is used to implement information and education projects statewide, with the focus on landowners, producers, and managers of Tennessee farms and forests.

Participating contractors in the program are encouraged to develop a watershed emphasis for their individual areas of responsibility, focusing on waters listed on the Tennessee 303(d) List as being impaired by agriculture. Current guidelines for the TDA-ARCF are available. Landowners can receive up to 75% of the cost of the BMP as a reimbursement.

The Tennessee Department of Agriculture has spent \$158,419 for Agriculture BMPs in the South Fork of the Forked Deer River Watershed since 1998. Additional information is provided in South Fork Forked Deer River SFFD-Appendix V.

Since January of 1999, the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Environment and Conservation have had a Memorandum of Agreement whereby complaints received by TDEC concerning agriculture or silviculture projects would be forwarded to TDA for investigation and possible correction. Should TDA be unable to obtain correction, they would assist TDEC in the enforcement against the violator.

5.3.D. Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency. The Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency conducts a variety of activities related to watershed conservation and management. Fish management activities include documentation of fish and aquatic life through stream sampling and stocking of both warm water and cold water sportfish. Fish data are managed in the Geographic Information System (GIS) project called Tennessee Aquatic Data System (TADS). TWRA nongame and endangered species projects include restoration of special status fish ,aquatic life, and riparian wildlife including otters, and nongame fish such as the blue masked darter. The Agency conducts a variety of

freshwater mussel management, conservation, and restoration projects including the propagation and reintroduction of species once common in Tennessee streams. TWRA has been involved in riparian conservation projects since 1991 in partnership with state and federal agencies and conservation groups.

For information on these and other water resources related activities, please contact your Regional TWRA office at the following phone numbers:

West Tennessee (Region I)	1-800-372-3928
Middle Tennessee (Region II)	1-800-624-7406
Cumberland Plateau (Region III)	1-800-262-6704
East Tennessee (Region IV)	1-800-332-0900.

TDD services are available @ 615-781-6691.
TWRA's website is <http://www.state.tn.us/twra>.

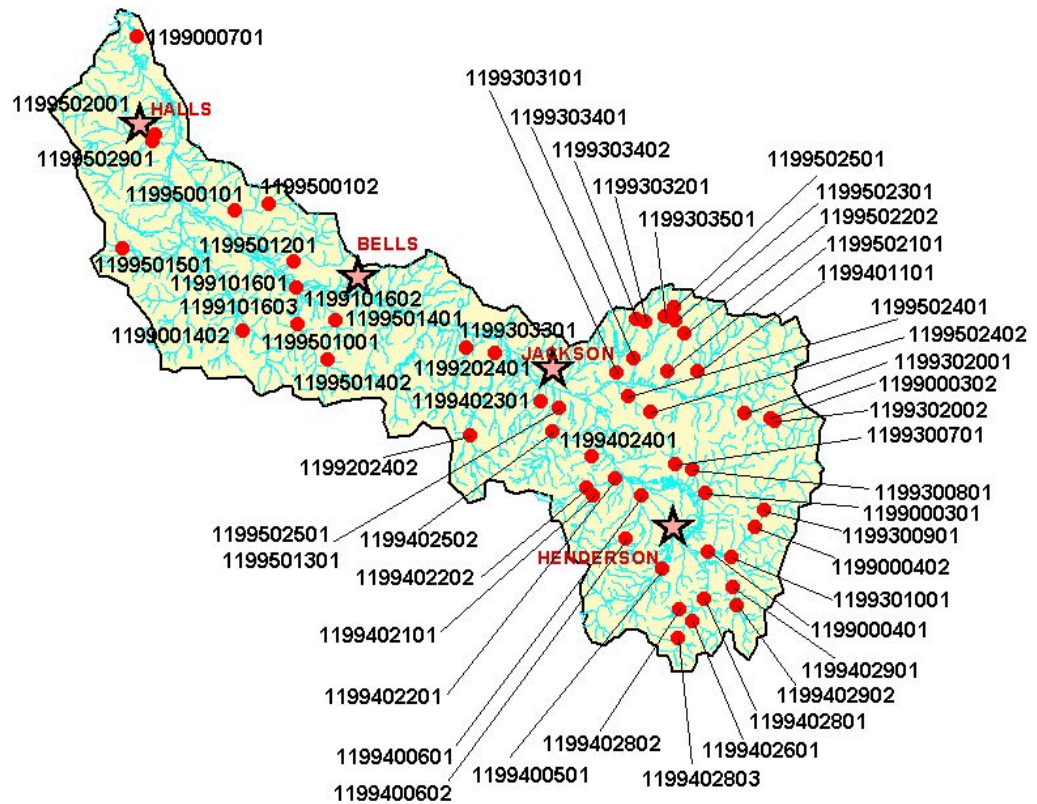


Figure 5-4. Location of TWRA TADS Sampling Sites in South Fork Forked Deer River Watershed. Locations of Halls, Bells, Jackson, and Henderson are shown for reference. Additional Information is presented in SFFD-Appendix V.

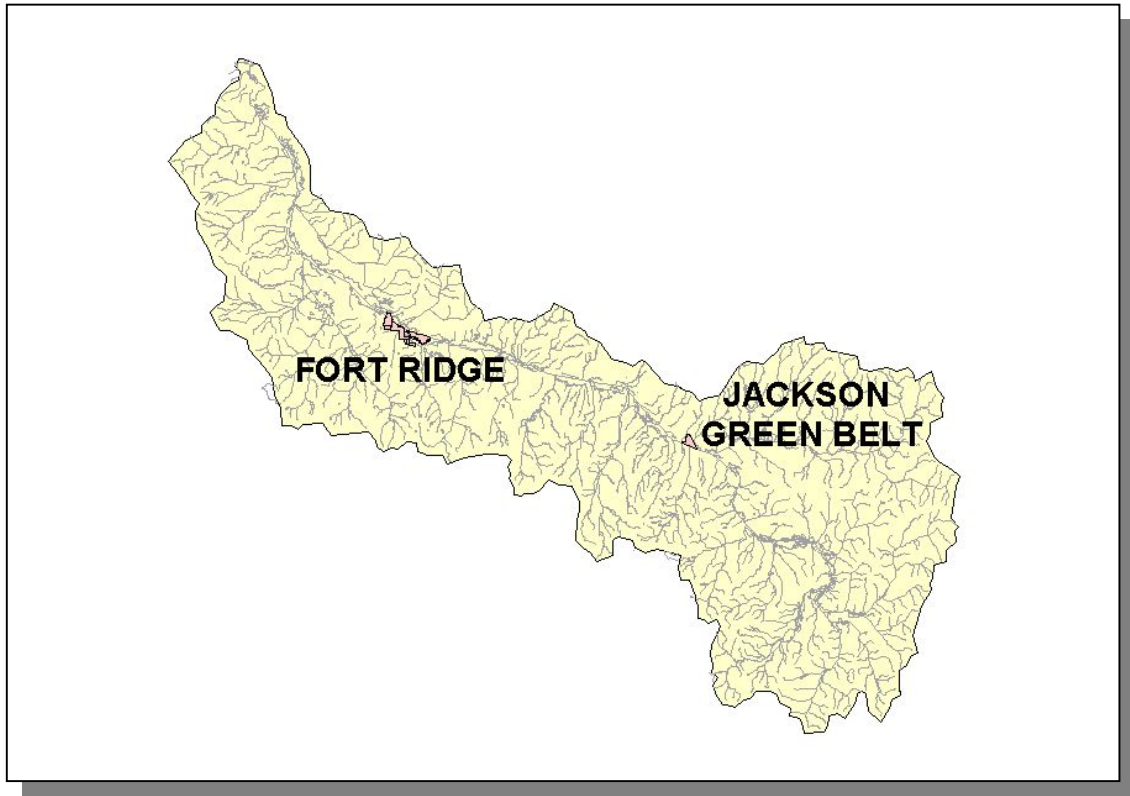


Figure 5-5. Location of TWRA Wetland Sites in South Fork Forked Deer River Watershed Purchased with Wetland Mitigation Funds.